

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 04883

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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TAGS: UR, KN, KS
SUBJECT: SOVIET MFA KOREAN DESK OFFICER DISCUSSES KOREA

REF: (A) MOSCOW 1643, (B) 77 MOSCOW 16529, (C) MOSCOW 2129

SUMMARY: SOVIET MFA KOREAN DESK OFFICER CLAIMS THAT 1978
KIM IL-SONG VISIT TO MOSCOW WILL BE ANOTHER INDICATION OF
"STRENGTHENING" TREND IN DPRK-SOVIET RELATIONS; DPRK
DEFENSE MINISTER RECENTLY IN MOSCOW DID NOT ASK FOR -
AND SOVIETS DID NOT OFFER - ARMS AID; DPRK IS ATTEMPTING
TO ATTRACT SUPPORT FOR ITS POSITION AMONG ASIAN AND
AFRICAN COUNTRIES AND IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT, WHILE
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RESTORING BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND MOSCOW;
IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUDGE WHETHER PYONGYANG WILL PUSH
KOREAN ISSUE AT UNGA. SOURCE ALSO ALLEGES THAT SOVIETS
ARE ATTEMPTING TO LESSEN POSSIBILITY OF WAR ON KOREAN
PENINSULA WHILE U.S. POLICY IS ENCOURAGING TENSIONS.
HIS BRIEF, AMBIGUOUS REACTION RE POSSIBLE FUTURE SOVIET
FLEXIBILITY ON "CROSS-RECOGNITION" MAY HAVE BEEN A

"DISINFORMATION" PLOY RATHER THAN A SINCERE REFLECTION OF SOVIET THINKING ON THIS ASPECT OF THE KOREAN PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON SOVIET MFA KOREAN DESK OFFICER, Y. D. FADEYEV, ON MARCH 14 TO DISCUSS NORTH KOREAN AFFAIRS. FOLLOWING ARE HIGHLIGHTS.

2. KIM IL-SONG VISIT TO MOSCOW: FADEYEV SAID THE DPRK INFORMED THE SOVIETS THAT KIM HAS ACCEPTED THE SOVIET INVITATION TO VISIT THE SOVIET UNION. SPECIFIC DATES FOR THE VISIT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ESTABLISHED BUT IT WILL TAKE PLACE IN 1978, PROBABLY IN THE SPRING (FADEYEV MENTIONED MAY OR JUNE) OR IN THE FALL. FADEYEV SAID THAT KIM HAS OUTSTANDING INVITATIONS FOR RETURN VISITS TO CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND THE GDR AND HE MIGHT THEREFORE ALSO CONTINUE ON TO PRAGUE OR BERLIN. HE THOUGHT THAT KIM WOULD BE MOST UNLIKELY TO ATTEND THE BELGRADE OR KABUL NON-ALIGNED MEETINGS, SINCE DELEGATION HEADS AT THESE CONFERENCES WOULD RANK BELOW THE CHIEF OF STATE LEVEL. KIM MAY, HOWEVER, CHOOSE TO ATTEND THE HAVANA NAM SUMMIT MEETING.

3. STRENGTHENING SOVIET-DPRK RELATIONS: IN PAST MEETINGS WITH EMBOFFS, FADEYEV CAREFULLY DESCRIBED SOVIET-DPRK RELATIONS AS "STABLE," "NORMAL" AND IMPROVING. DURING CONFIDENTIAL

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THIS MEETING, HE DESCRIBED THEM AS "NORMAL" AND, IN SOME AREAS, "STRENGTHENING." TO REINFORCE HIS CONCLUSION HE POINTED TO:

-- HIGH LEVEL EXCHANGES OF VISITS INCLUDING PAK SONG-CHOL'S EARLY 1977 VISIT TO MOSCOW, THE 1978 KUNAYEV VISIT TO THE DPRK, AND DPRK DEFENSE MINISTER O CHIN-U'S RECENT VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION;

-- GROWING TRADE, WHICH ROSE FROM A 300 MILLION RUBLE TURNOVER IN 1976 TO A 325 MILLION RUBLE TURNOVER IN 1977. (NOTE: THIS 6 PERCENT RATE OF GROWTH IS WELL BELOW AVERAGE SOVIET FOREIGN TRADE GROWTH RATE OF 11 PERCENT. END NOTE.) FADEYEV EXPRESSED CERTAINTY THAT THE LEVEL WOULD INCREASE FURTHER IN 1978. HE REFUSED TO SPECULATE ON PROJECTED 1978 LEVELS SINCE NEGOTIATIONS ARE STILL UNDERWAY. MOSCOW IS CONTINUING TO ASSIST FIFTEEN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE DPRK; A SOVIET-BUILT PLANT PRODUCING AUTOMOBILE BATTERIES WAS JUST COMPLETED. FADEYEV SAID THAT THE SOVIET UNION WILL FORMULATE A NEW PROGRAM OF AID TO THE DPRK WHEN THE CURRENT SOVIET FIVE-YEAR PLAN IS COMPLETED IN 1980;

-- A TWO-YEAR CULTURAL AGREEMENT, WHICH WILL BE SIGNED IN MOSCOW LATER THIS YEAR.

4. EMBOFF ASKED IF THE SOVIETS HAVE WITHHELD EXPORTS TO NORTH KOREA, INCLUDING OIL SHIPMENTS, BECAUSE OF PYONGYANG'S FAILURE TO MEET ITS EXPORT COMMITMENTS. FADEYEV ANSWERED THAT THE SOVIET UNION, LIKE CHINA, FOLLOWS A RATHER FIRM POLICY TOWARD THE DPRK ON THIS ISSUE. BOTH HAVE HELD UP ON SHIPMENTS TO THE DPRK. OIL COMPRISES SOMEWHAT LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL SOVIET EXPORTS TO THE DPRK AND THE SOVIET UNION HAS HELD UP ON OIL SHIPMENTS IN THE PAST WHEN PYONGYANG HAS FAILED TO

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MEET ITS COMMITMENTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIET UNION HAS POSTPONED PYONGYANG'S REPAYMENT OF DEBTS UNTIL 1981, AND WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO AGREE TO A FURTHER POST-PONEMENT IN 1981.

5. SOVIET-DPRK MILITARY RELATIONS: EMBOFF ASKED IF CHANGES WERE TAKING PLACE IN SOVIET-DPRK MILITARY RELATIONS AS WELL AND MENTIONED DEFENSE MINISTER O'S RECENT VISIT TO THE SOVIET UNION. FADEYEV SAID THAT SOVIET

MILITARY AGREEMENTS WITH THE DPRK EXPIRED ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO, AND HAD NOT BEEN RENEWED. HE CLAIMED THAT MOSCOW HAS NO INTENTION TO RESUME SENDING ARMS TO NORTH KOREA SINCE THIS COULD INCREASE THE POSSIBILITY FOR DISTURBING THE PEACE IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA. UNDER PERSISTENT QUESTIONING, HE RELUCTANTLY DISCUSSED DPRK
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DEFENSE MINISTER O'S RECENT VISIT TO THE USSR STATING THAT:

-- O MET WITH SOVIET DEFENSE MINISTER USTINOV AND OTHER SOVIET MILITARY OFFICIALS;

-- ACCORDING TO REPORTS FADEYEV HAD SEEN, O DID NOT REQUEST ARMS AND NO ARMS WERE OFFERED;

-- O MAY HAVE VISITED PLACES OUTSIDE MOSCOW, BUT HIS ITINERARY DID NOT INCLUDE LENINGRAD.

6. DPRK FOREIGN POLICY: FADEYEV AGREED THAT PYONGYANG IS EXPANDING ITS INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO ATTRACT SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA AND ASIA AND IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (N.A.M.). HE CLAIMED IT WAS TOO EARLY TO PRE-DICT WHETHER THE DPRK WILL SEEK TO REVIVE THE KOREAN ISSUE AT THE UN. HE OPINED THAT PYONGYANG'S MOVE TO RESTORE BALANCE IN ITS RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND MOSCOW BY IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION MAY BE INFLUENCED BY ITS ASPIRATIONS IN THE N.A.M. (COMMENT: WE ASSUME FADEYEV MEANT THAT PYONGYANG MAY BE ATTEMPTING TO LESSEN POSSIBLE DISPLEASURE OF EITHER THE PRC OR THE USSR AS IT PURSUES DIPLOMATIC OBJECTIVES IN THE N.A.M. AND POSSIBLY THE UN AS WELL. END COMMENT.) PYONGYANG'S FOREIGN POLICY IS DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF NORTH KOREAN INTERESTS. IN SOME AREAS, IT DIFFERS FROM SOVIET POLICY (DPRK "SYMPATHY" TOWARD CAMBODIA; STRIVING FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALL THE ARAB STATES, INCLUDING SADAT'S EGYPT); IN OTHER AREAS IT DIFFERS FROM CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY (DPRK OPPOSITION TO THE U.S.-JAPANESE DEFENSE AGREEMENT; OPPOSITION TO ZAIRE AND SUPPORT FOR THE SHABA INVASION). FADEYEV NOTED THAT KIM'S LAST
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TRIP TO THE SOVIET UNION WAS IN 1961; IN 1975 HE VISITED CHINA. HIS 1978 VISIT TO MOSCOW WILL CONTRIBUTE TO RESTORING THE BALANCE IN RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND THE

USSR.

7. DPRK FEBRUARY 1 MEMORANDUM: FADEYEV AGREED THAT THE FEBRUARY 1 MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A FORMAL STATEMENT REGARDING PYONGYANG'S POSITION ON REUNIFICATION. HE DISMISSED AS INSIGNIFICANT THE FAILURE OF PRAVDA'S FEB. 12 COMMENTARY (REF C) TO ECHO THE MEMORANDUM'S SPECIFIC DENUNCIATION OF THE U.S. SUGGESTED POLICY OF "CROSS-RECOGNITION." HE ALSO TERMED INSIGNIFICANT THE COMMENTARY'S MENTION OF THE CREATION OF A "SEPARATE SOUTH KOREAN STATE" (AS OPPOSED TO "REGIME") AFTER WWII. HE REPEATED HIS REMARKS ON SOUTH KOREA, REPORTED REF B, THAT:

-- MOSCOW DOES NOT RECOGNIZE THE "DE JURE" EXISTENCE OF SOUTH KOREA AND WILL HAVE NO CONTACT WITH SOUTH KOREAN AUTHORITIES. THE SOUTH KOREANS SHOULD HAVE NO "ILLUSIONS" THAT MOSCOW WILL CONSIDER ESTABLISHING CONTACTS; BUT,

-- THE SOVIET UNION MUST ACCEPT "REALITY" AND SEE SOUTH KOREA "DE FACTO" AS AN "INDEPENDENT" AND "SELF-SUFFICIENT" STATE;

-- IF SOVIET NEWSPAPER WRITERS OR ACADEMIC SPECIALISTS WRITE ANYTHING THAT IMPLIES SOVIET SUPPORT FOR A "TWO KOREAS" POLICY, THIS IS MERELY "BY CHANCE" (SLUCHAYNA). INDEED, THE SOVIET PRESS OPENLY CRITICIZES THE U.S. "TWO KOREAS" POLICY.

8. EMBOFF ASKED IF THE SOVIET UNION, AT SOME FUTURE DATE, WOULD BE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE EARLIER U.S.

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SUGGESTION FOR "CROSS-RECOGNITION" OF THE DPRK BY SEOUL'S ALLIES IF PYONGYANG'S ALLIES DO THE SAME WITH SEOUL. FADEYEV HALF NODDED BUT THEN IMMEDIATELY DECLARED THAT CHINA WOULD REJECT THE PROPOSAL. BEYOND THIS REACTION, WHICH COULD BE INTERPRETED AS IMPLICIT LINKAGE OF SOVIET ACCEPTANCE OF "CROSS-RECOGNITION" WITH CHINESE ACCEPTANCE, HE REFUSED TO BE DRAWN OUT FURTHER ON THE POSSIBILITY OF FUTURE SHIFTS IN SOVIET POLICY TOWARD CROSS-RECOGNITION.

9. INTERNAL NORTH KOREAN POLITICS: FADEYEV HAD LITTLE TO SAY OTHER THAN TO NOTE KIM IL-SONG IS FIRMLY IN POWER AND IN GOOD HEALTH.

10. U.S.-ROK RELATIONS: FOLLOWING EMBOFF'S QUESTIONS, CONFIDENTIAL

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FADEYEV DEFERRED CONCLUDING THE MEETING BY EMBARKING ON A TEN MINUTE MONOLOGUE. HE CLAIMED THAT:

-- THE SOVIET UNION IS DOING ALL POSSIBLE TO LOWER THE POSSIBILITY OF INCREASED TENSION ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA. THE DPRK IS PURSUING A POLICY AIMED AT REDUCED TENSIONS AND PEACEFUL UNIFICATION;

-- IN CONTRAST, THE U.S. PLANS TO STEP UP ARMS AID TO THE ROK, INCLUDING WEAPONS THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN INTRODUCED IN THE KOREAN PENINSULA. THE CURRENT "TEAM SPIRIT" ROK-U.S. MANEUVERS CAN ONLY FEED TENSIONS AND EXACERBATE DPRK CONCERNS ABOUT POSSIBLE ROK AGGRESSION. FADEYEV ALLEGED THAT THE U.S. INCLUSION OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR ARMS IN THE MANEUVERS IS ESPECIALLY TROUBLING.

EMBOFF RESPONDED THAT THE U.S. MUST FACE THE HISTORICAL PRECEDENT OF A DPRK MILITARY ONSLAUGHT ON SOUTH KOREA FOLLOWING WITHDRAWAL OF U.S. GROUND TROOPS. THE LEADERSHIP IN PYONGYANG REMAINS BASICALLY THE SAME TWENTY-SEVEN YEARS AFTER THE INVASION. THE DPRK REMAINS REGIMENTED FOR WAR. THE U.S. DOES NOT BELIEVE THE ARGUMENTS THAT SEOUL INTENDS TO ATTACK THE DPRK AND UNDERSTANDABLY FINDS IT HARD TO BELIEVE PYONGYANG'S

PEACEFUL PROTESTATIONS. THERE SHOULD BE NO
DOUBT ABOUT U.S. RESOLVE TO DEFEND ITS ALLY.

11. FADEYEV CONCLUDED THE MEETING ON AN AMIABLE NOTE BY
STATING THAT BOTH HE AND EMBOFF SEEMED CAPABLE OF
UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER'S POSITION.

12. COMMENT: FADEYEV'S CRITICISM OF U.S. KOREAN POLICY,
INCLUDING "TEAM SPIRIT" MANEUVERS, SEEMED WELL-PREPARED
AND COINCIDES WITH CURRENT SOVIET PRESS CAMPAIGN
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AGAINST "TEAM SPIRIT" AS "PROVOCATIVE" AND "DANGEROUS"
TO PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THE PENINSULA.

13. THE MOST NOTEWORTHY ASPECTS OF FADEYEV'S REMARKS
APPEAR TO BE:

-- HIS ASSERTION THAT SOVIET-DPRK RELATIONS ARE IMPROVING,
AND THAT THE DPRK MAY BE ADOPTING THIS POLICY IN THE
GREATER CONTEXT OF ATTRACTING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR
ITS POSITIONS ON THE KOREAN PROBLEM. FADEYEV VOLUNTEERED
NOTHING ON WHETHER THE SOVIETS WOULD BE SUPPORTING OR
ENCOURAGING PYONGYANG IN ITS EFFORTS TO BUILD SUPPORT AT
KABUL OR BELGRADE. HOWEVER, PARTICULARLY IF KIM'S
VISIT TO MOSCOW TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE UNGA MEETING AND
IF THE NORTH KOREANS DECIDE TO PUSH THEIR CASE AT THIS
YEAR'S UNGA, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE
LITTLE OPTION BUT TO SUPPORT SUCH A DPRK MOVE;

-- HIS (PROBABLY PURPOSEFULLY) AMBIGUOUS REACTION
REGARDING POSSIBLE FUTURE SOVIET FLEXIBILITY ON "CROSS-
RECOGNITION." FADEYEV ALWAYS CHOOSES HIS WORDS CAREFULLY
AND WE DO NOT CONSIDER HIS REMARK A "SLIP." AT THE
SAME TIME, IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE THAT THIS IMPLICIT HINT
AT POSSIBLE FUTURE FLEXIBILITY WAS A "DISINFORMATION"
PLOY DESIGNED TO CONFUSE RATHER THAN TO SIGNAL A
SHIFT IN SOVIET POSITION ON KOREA. TOON

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